

## Special Council Meeting—November 19, 2014

The special meeting of the Council of the Town of Altavista was held in the Council Chambers of the J.R. Burgess Municipal Building, 510 Seventh Street on November 19, 2014 at 7:00 a.m.

### 1. Vice Mayor Dalton called the meeting to order and presided.

Council members  
present:

Mrs. Beverley Dalton  
Mr. Charles Edwards  
Mr. Tracy Emerson  
Mr. Bill Ferguson  
Mr. Timothy George  
Mr. Jay Higginbotham

Council members  
absent:

Mayor Michael Mattox

Also present:

Mr. J. Waverly Coggsdale, III, Town Manager  
Mr. David Garrett, Public Works/Utilities Director  
Mr. Steve Bond, Wastewater Treatment Manager  
Mr. John Eller, Town Attorney

### 2. Dr. Sowers' Proposal

Mr. Higginbotham gave Council a brief presentation on the works of Dr. Sowers. In 2007 samples were sent to Dr. Sowers and he confirmed the natural microbes eating the PCBs. The goal is to find a way to destroy PCBs. In 2012, 2013, barrels were installed for further testing. Dr. Higginbotham advised a letter was recently received from DEQ requesting an update on the town's progress. Dr. Sowers wrote a letter to DEQ at no charge to the Town explaining his concern.

Vice Mayor Dalton asked what Dr. Sowers report to DEQ was.

Mr. Coggsdale advised it was a summary of his April visit.

Vice Mayor Dalton asked if it had a statement about PCBs.

Mr. Higginbotham advised there was an 80% reduction of PCBs in 30 days on the top layer but couldn't mix enough on the bottom layer.

Mr. George asked what the plan was to reach the bottom layer.

Mr. Higginbotham advised Dr. Sowers is asking to make four 10 x 10 boxes mixing the sludge by pumping back and forth until it is all one mass. He then tests that and then tests his control. Dr. Sowers said there may be a reduction in PCBs just from pumping the sludge back and forth but needs to prove that the SediMite is doing this not just pumping. The SediMite is being paid for by a grant.

Vice Mayor Dalton referred to the testing control. In the test Dr. Sowers will mix by pumping back and forth and will test once he gets a homogeneous then he will test to see what the levels are.

Mr. George asked if the Town's employees would be pumping.

Mr. Higginbotham stated Dr. Sowers wants it pumped every 30 days for 90 days. In the summer more SediMite will be added and he would be testing along the way.

Vice Mayor Dalton asked what the cells would be built with.

## Special Council Meeting—November 19, 2014

Mr. Higginbotham said it could be built with clay but recommends barriers with clay used at the joints.

Vice Mayor Dalton asked how many is needed.

Mr. Higginbotham responded approximately 14 with a walkway.

Vice Mayor Dalton asked where the barriers would be coming from and the cost.

Mr. Higginbotham responded he has located some in Hurt and also Richmond.

Vice Mayor Dalton asked how these would be set.

Mr. Higginbotham responded they would be set with the town's track hoe or crane.

Vice Mayor Dalton asked staff their comfort level for what is being proposed and their role in this matter.

Mr. Garrett did not feel it would be a problem.

Vice Mayor Dalton asked what personal controls would be needed for the staff against the PCBs.

Mr. Garrett responded Tyvek suits, rubber boots, latex gloves and respirator. He noted there is no OSHA standard for this type of protection. He also noted there would be a decontamination area where the employees can wash off.

Vice Mayor Dalton questioned the pumping of sludge.

Mr. Garret stated there is a pump in place but a sludge pump would be needed.

Mr. Higginbotham stated he didn't have a problem with an old pump being used for this and a replacement purchased.

Vice Mayor Dalton asked for a cost for shipping the supplies.

Mr. Higginbotham advised Dr. Sowers gave an estimate of \$500 to \$1,000 for shipping and then the cost of his hotel expenses.

Mr. Coggsdale felt Dr. Sowers needs to be reimbursed for his mileage as well.

Mr. Higginbotham referred to the November 12, 2014 Continued Council meeting with Gay & Neel stating they gave Council a different perspective; filling the pond with stone and capping. He felt Council was looking for a treatment cap; something that reduces the PCBs instead of covering and leaving them alone. He felt all was working in the same concept. He stated the problem he has with ECS he would not waste money putting stone in and the rushing of saying this has to be done immediately and spending half a million dollars in stone. This would create a cistern of water under the stone.

Vice Mayor Dalton asked if this was done has Council precluded themselves from what the IALR has proposed.

Mr. Coggsdale stated they would be taking the sludge and sitting it to the side in pots.

Mr. Higginbotham stated for the past 20 years he has been dealing with DEQ and EPA and the bureaucracy and Council needs to do what they think is right.

Mr. George felt \$5,000 or more will be spent on Dr. Sowers' project and that was not a problem. From the November 12, 2014 Continued meeting, he gleaned Council may not have the option for phytoremediation and with this pending he hesitates to move forward with this. He questioned the process with IALR.

## Special Council Meeting—November 19, 2014

Mr. Coggsdale advised IALR's contract allows for termination at any point. Staff will continue to proceed with the risk portion of the contract before full implementation of the pots.

Mr. George questioned when Council would hear back from Gay & Neel.

Mr. Coggsdale stated he should get information back from them in 4 to 6 weeks.

Mr. Higginbotham stated he has heard the comment that Council may want to cancel the contract. He noted Dr. Licht's group has tested switchgrass. IALR proposes to do the same testing with the town's sludge. Mr. Higginbotham stated this is all covered under the master program of getting some type of vegetation to grow its roots down. He felt they all fit together to solve the problem.

Vice Mayor Dalton stated Council's role as decision makers is to take in all sorts of information; the engineering firm will give today's view of what the regulators might want Council to do.

Mr. Edwards stated DEQ told Council at the meeting held at the Train Station that if Council fails to meet the terms of the VRP that they might kick us out. Mr. Mead Anderson stated he presumed the EPA would pick the town up if kicked out of the VRP. He stated Mr. Steve Rock (Cincinnati Division) and Mr. Steve Rice (Charleston, head of the area for the Town) told the town to move forward and advance the technology. He stated the point is the EPA is not concerned.

Mr. George stated he was aware of these comments but his understanding from the engineer is if the Town is kicked out of the VRP, they have lost their right to remediate and the EPA will come in and tell the Town what to do.

Vice Mayor Dalton stated she felt that was Gay & Neel's experience.

Mr. Higginbotham felt Gay & Neel based this on Mr. Charlie William's letter.

Mr. Ferguson stated he agreed with everything Mr. Higginbotham is doing but felt Council should wait on the report from Gay & Neel before moving forward.

Mr. Higginbotham advised the SediMite product is being made now and has a shelf life of 30 days. Dr. Sowers is volunteering his time; Council pays for shipping of the SediMite, Dr. Sowers' fuel and hotel expenses. This has to be prepared for Dr. Sowers by December 15, 2014. He noted Dr. Sowers has been working with the Town since 2007, done all the testing at no cost and felt this is a gift that cannot be looked over.

Mr. Edwards questioned what it was about this project that would make the DEQ come any quicker; he didn't see that happening.

Mr. Higginbotham felt the capping process is going to be more expensive than phytoremediation

Mr. George stated Gay & Neel mentioned theoretically the pond could be filled with gravel and then cap with dirt; he asked if this was done that would take care of the PCB problem.

Vice Mayor Dalton felt there would still be testing because the PCBs are still there.

Mr. George asked if the rubble from the demolition of the Lane building could be used to fill the lagoon.

Vice Mayor Dalton asked Council if they would be proceeding with Dr. Sowers' proposal.

Special Council Meeting—November 19, 2014

Mr. Emerson stated spending this amount of money is no big deal; his concern is when does this come to an end. How much does Council keep doing before there is a straight path? He asked does Council have to do anything. Morally Council should do something about this. Who is going to do something to us if we don't do anything? He feels like it is a pit that Council keeps adding to with no answers.

Mr. Coggsdale advised as long as the Town is in the VRP, no one is making the Town do anything, the town is voluntarily remediating the problem.

Vice Mayor Dalton stated in the letter to DEQ, Council was able to document a lot of good faith efforts. She felt the law sides on good faith efforts and good judgment.

Mr. Eller advised the EPA would be the agency the Town would contend with if they fall out of the VRP.

Mr. Emerson stated he did not care about the money being spent today but he would not vote to spend another penny on PCBs until there is some direction.

A motion was made by Mr. Higginbotham, seconded by Mr. Edwards, to move forward with Dr. Sowers' proposal covering the cost of the shipping of the SediMite and travel expenses.

Motion carried:

VOTE:	Mrs. Beverley Dalton	Yes
	Mr. Charles Edwards	Yes
	Mr. Tracy Emerson	Yes
	Mr. Bill Ferguson	No
	Mr. Timothy George	No
	Mr. Jay Higginbotham	Yes

Mr. Higginbotham advised of a new store being built in the Town of Hurt. There is dirt to be disposed of and asked Council for consideration of stockpiling this dirt for use at the Wastewater Treatment Plant.

Mr. Coggsdale asked how much room is needed to stockpile the dirt.

Vice Mayor Dalton suggested Council make a contingent recommendation that there is an appropriate place to store the dirt and that the dirt is available.

Mr. Coggsdale stated if Council is interested in pursuing staff would need the name of a contact person.

A motion by Mr. Higginbotham, seconded by Mr. Edwards, to explore the possibility of obtaining the dirt from a site in the Town of Hurt to be used at the Wastewater Treatment Plant.

Motion carried:

VOTE:	Mrs. Beverley Dalton	Yes
	Mr. Charles Edwards	Yes
	Mr. Tracy Emerson	Yes
	Mr. Bill Ferguson	Yes
	Mr. Timothy George	Yes
	Mr. Jay Higginbotham	Yes

3. Adjournment

Vice Mayor Dalton asked if there was anything else to bring before Council.

The meeting was adjourned at 7:45 A.M.

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Beverley Dalton, Vice Mayor

Special Council Meeting—November 19, 2014

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J. Waverly Coggsdale, III, Clerk